

pravasi

bharatiya divas 2007

Connecting with The Indian Diaspora



Dr Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India releasing the Handbook for Overseas Indians at the Inauguration. Also seen (L-R) R Seshasayee, President, CII, Sheila Dikshit, Chief Minister, NCT of Delhi, S Jayakumar, Deputy Prime Minister, Singapore and Vayalar Ravi, Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs



Dr A P J Abdul Kalam, President of India at the Valedictory Session. Also Seen (L-R) R Seshasayee, Nirmal Singh, Secretary, Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, Vayalar Ravi and S Jayakumar

Emergent India, spurred by the indomitable spirit of globalisation, is assiduously establishing strategic relationships with nations and people in the new global economic architecture. Connecting with the estimated 25 million People of Indian Origin (PIO) is a key constituent of this global approach. The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2007, organised jointly by the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs and CII, and the government of NCT of Delhi, in New Delhi during January 7-9 this year, was indeed a major step forward in engaging the PIOs in India's developmental process. This was clearly stated by Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh in his inaugural address, when he urged overseas Indians to take full advantage of the opportunities in India and invest "not just financially, but also intellectually, culturally, emotionally."

The Prime Minister described the convention as a celebration of the homecoming of global Indians and said the Government would work steadfastly to create an enabling environment for People of Indian Origin to reconnect with their mother

country. He also spoke about plans to set up a world class PIO University. Mr Vayalar Ravi, Union Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs, explained later that the university will be governed by the UGC Act and will be set up in a Special Economic Zone. The Minister also said the Government would seek to raise the scholarship amounts for NRIs and other overseas Indians.

- 1200 Pravasi delegates from over 47 countries
- Inauguration by Dr. Manmohan Singh Prime Minister of India
- Valedictory Address by Dr APJ Abdul Kalam President of India
- Chief Guest Prof. S. Jayakumar Deputy Prime Minister, Singapore
- 29 Indian Ministers
- 5 Overseas Ministers
- 6 State Chief Ministers
- 7 Members of Parliament
- 6 Plenary Sessions
- 22 Working Sessions
- 175 Speakers including 44 from overseas
- 4 books released

The Indian leadership was unwavering in its approach to build an emotional connect with the Diaspora. This was clearly expressed by the President of India, Dr A P J Abdul Kalam, in his valedictory address when he said, "When we go up in life, every one of us feels that we should give and give. It is this spirit that guides 25 million Indians who are away from India."

The President spoke of a visionary World Knowledge Platform to bridge the vast experiences of overseas Indian with India's ascent phase of economic growth. He also reminded the audience of the need to collectively work towards improving the welfare of under-privileged PIO spread across the world who do not possess the resources to participate in international conventions and engagements. In this light, the Divas also brought sharp focus on the welfare of the overseas Indian workers. Mr Ravi assured that the Government is in talks with several West Asian countries, particularly the UAE, to protect the rights of Indian expat workers there.

Inviting Investment & Ideas



Bhupinder Singh Hooda, Chief Minister, Haryana, Sheila Dixit, Pranab Mukherjee, Minister of External Affairs, R Seshasayee, Ambika Soni, Minister of Tourism and Culture, Narendra Modi, Chief Minister, Gujarat & Gautam Singh, Minister of State for Industry, Bihar



P Chidambaram, Finance Minister with Ratan Tata, Chairman, Investment Commission



Sharad Pawar, Minister of Agriculture, Vayalar Ravi, Kirit Parikh, Member, Planning Commission and K S Naidu, Minister for Large & Medium Industries, Karnataka



Prof C K Prahalad, University of Michigan's Business School, USA, Kamal Nath, Minister of Commerce and Industry and Gopalkrishna Gandhi, Governor, West Bengal

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2007 was also an arena to discuss business. Towards this, several State Chief Ministers showcased the emerging investment opportunities in their respective states. The Chief Minister of NCT of Delhi, Ms Shiela Dixit, urged Indian abroad to share their expertise with the country of their origin. She sought knowledge, expertise and resources from overseas Indians in cleaning up River Yamuna which is the key source of drinking water for the state.

Mr Narendra Modi, Chief Minister, Gujarat said his state has recorded the fastest growth rate of 10.2% and is developing special SEZs that are benchmarked with those in the developed countries. He said, "Rural Gujarat will become the nerve-centre of industrial activity in the state."

Mr Gopalkrishna Gandhi, Governor, West Bengal, said, "We do welcome the investments you want to make. But at the same time, it cannot be overemphasised that the hearts and minds of NRI is what India needs the most to meet its challenges."

The Chief Minister of Haryana, Mr Bhupinder Singh Hooda, said his state is aiming to take the top slot and added that the New Industrial Policy initiatives had paved the way for unprecedented investment inflows of nearly Rs 10,000 crore. The state has taken strong steps to build world class infrastructure, which is a pre-requisite for attractive overseas investments.

Mr Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, made a poignant statement when he said at a working session, "There might not be room for everybody in the hall, but there is more than enough room in our hearts for you." Mr Rakesh C Sahni, Chief Secretary, MP, added, "The cost of land, water, power and manpower in MP is among the lowest in the country."

The Bihar Government too laid out the red carpet for overseas investments. Minister of State for Industry (IC), Mr Gautam Singh, said his state is focused on promoting private-public partnerships for infrastructure development and asked NRIs to take

advantage of the emerging business opportunities in the state.

Developmental Goals

The state government initiatives were subsets of the larger plan that the Union government had drawn up to attract PIO attention towards fulfilment of India's developmental goals. Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Mr. Kamal Nath, said that India is a young nation and this needs to be seen as an opportunity that would combat whatever challenges comes it way.

The Prime Minister and Mr Vayalar Ravi spoke about the Overseas Indian Facilitation Centre, to serve as a single window for investment advisory services, before the convening of the next Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in January 2008. The Government has also initiated the groundwork for setting up the proposed Central Council for Overseas Employment.

Delineating the key areas of partnership, Union Minister of External Affairs, Mr Pranab Mukherjee said mutually advantageous



Shivraj Patil,
Minister of Home
Affairs



Mani Shankar Aiyar,
Minister of Panchayati
Raj, Youth Affairs &
Sports and
Dev. of North East



A K Antony,
Minister of Defence



Montek Singh Ahluwalia,
Deputy Chairman,
Planning Commission



S Jaipal Reddy,
Minister of Urban
Development



P R Dasmunsi,
Minister for I & B &
Parliamentary Affairs



Ashwani Kumar,
Minister of State
for Industry



Prithviraj Chavan,
Minister of State, PMO



Anand Sharma,
Minister of State
for External Affairs



Oscar Fernandes,
Minister of State for
Labour & Employment

partnerships could be forged in social sector development, infrastructure, farming, education, R&D and innovation and energy security.

On a different track, Minister of Tourism & Culture, Ms Ambika Soni spoke of the government's key initiatives to promote all-round development of the tourism sector. She highlighted the promotion of India as a key centre for international meetings, conferences and exhibitions.

Innovations in electronics and genetics are critical to India's future prosperity, stated Mr Shivraj Patil, Union Minister of Home Affairs. Mr Patil said NRIs could make a positive and significant contribution in India's growth in ocean resources, and knowledge, and knowledge services.

Union Agriculture Minister, Mr Sharad Pawar, stressed that "achieving inclusive growth necessarily means higher incomes for farmers, who have lately been under considerable stress due to a combination of factors" He said that encouraging public-private collaboration in the agricultural sector was an important policy decision of the Indian government. He called for private investment, particularly in the medium term, in biotechnology, energy and horticulture. Agriculture was cited as a key area where NRIs

could invest and bring in new technologies.

Mr P Chidambaram, Union Finance Minister, rounded off the Government's investment priorities when he said that "India's sustainable growth requires the twin imperatives of investment and knowledge. Among the areas that require investment, infrastructure is most important. Over the next 5 years, it would require an investment of US \$ 320 billion."

Terming the knowledge possessed by NRIs as "more valuable" than the material resources that India seeks, Mr Chidambaram urged the NRI community to emerge as a knowledge partner in India's development. He said, "While India is climbing the ladders of economic success, deficiencies exist. Perhaps the most formidable of them all is agricultural development. Economic progress in the true sense of the term would happen when India's growth is inclusive."

Education was a key focus area. On this, Minister of Urban Development S Jaipal Reddy, said, "We have the IITs and IIMs at one end of the scale, and teacher-less schools at the other. To correct these imbalances, India needs to strengthen linkages with its Diaspora."

Mr. Reddy said India has to ensure

that the children of NRIs, especially those working in the Gulf, get a quality education.

Mr E Ahmed, Union Minister of State for External Affairs, raised certain issues faced by Indians in Gulf, like poor living conditions, lack of facilities for professional education, rehabilitation problems, etc., which needed to be addressed.

Ms Renuka Choudhury, Minister of State of Women and Child Development, discussed the prevailing issues regarding the atrocities committed against women. She said that India is experiencing rising maternal mortality rates, along with other problems like female infanticide and foeticide. She also expressed concern about the cases of desertion of Indian brides by NRI grooms.

Focusing on media & communications, Mr. Priya Ranjan Dasmunsi, Union Minister for Information & Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs said, "What is important is not the number of applications but the package support being provided to potential investors by India's market economy." Mr. Dasmunsi said that the autonomy enjoyed by the Indian media allowed it to provide a guiding light to the government on many issues.



Shivraj Singh Chouhan,
Chief Minister,
Madhya Pradesh



Yashodhara Raje Scindia,
Minister for Tourism,
Sports & Youth Welfare,
Madhya Pradesh



Narpat Singh Rajvi,
Minister for Industry,
Rajasthan



E Ahamed,
Minister of State for
External Affairs



G K Vasan, Minister of
State, Statistics &
Programme Implementation



Sam Pitroda, Chairman,
Knowledge Commission



Sitaram Yechury,
Member of Parliament



Jana K Krishnamurthy,
Member of Parliament



Sachin Pilot,
Member of Parliament



Syeda Hameed,
Member, Planning
Commission (Health)

Technology For Development

Mr S Ramadorai, MD, TCS, said, “The unprecedented opportunities emerging can be realised only with the application of appropriate technologies”. The digital divide could be bridged by bringing more Indian languages into the IT communications system. Mr Ramadorai said due efforts are required to build IT connectivity across the country, which would facilitate the extension of e-learning, telemedicine and other basic services across the country. Such initiatives will also spur greater employment generation, he said.

Mr Sam Pitroda, Chairman, Knowledge Commission, said that technology should cease to be urban and elitist, and instead serve as a problem-solving tool. Underlining the

need to democratize information access, Mr Pitroda said the Right to Information Act has ushered in a regime of openness and decentralization.

Mr Sunil Mittal, Vice President, CII, and Chairman & Group MD, Bharti Enterprises said that mobile technology could be used to address the economic needs of people living in the hinterland. “M-commerce will enable people to carry out banking transactions even if they have no physical access to banks. This will be particularly relevant in the rural areas,” he said.

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2007 also underlined India Inc’s global forays as true MNCs. Mr Ratan Tata, Chairman, Investment Commission, explained that “today if the Tata group

can think of making a major acquisition abroad, it is only due to prudent government policies since reforms began. Not only Tata, but no Indian player could even think of venturing abroad in the wake of stringent policy regulations”.

The presence of 1200 delegates from 47 countries at the convention reflected the growing importance of India as a business destination around the globe. Importantly, the mega-event also served to strengthen the India’s constituency in different countries. Indian-Americans have already demonstrated the important role that Indians overseas could play in shaping globally-important policies and agreements, such as the US-India nuclear deal.



Renuka Choudhury, Minister of State of Women and Child Development at the working session on Women



Dato G Palanivel,
Deputy Minister of
Women, Family &
Community Dev.,
Malaysia



Harinder Takhar,
Minister for Small
Business &
Entrepreneurship,
Ontario, Canada



Madan M Dulloo,
Foreign Minister,
Mauritius



Balaji Sadasivan,
Sr. Minister of State
for Foreign Affairs,
Singapore



Dato Seri S Samy Vellu,
Minister of Works,
Malaysia

From The Diaspora: Salutes & Suggestions

The foreign delegates were generous in their praise for India's economic progress and promised support for the country's developmental programmes. Prof. S Jayakumar, Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore, who was the Chief Guest at PBD 2007, observed that, economic engagements apart, India will have a central strategic role in the region. "India is part of the East Asian equation".

Dato Seri S Samy Vellu, Cabinet Minister of Works, Malaysia & President, Malaysian Indian Congress, said that "the level of positivism that is embedded in India's growth story today warrants the ambitious US \$ 1.5 trillion capital investment that it seeks. Not investing in India is an opportunity lost."

On bridging the digital divide in India, Dr Balaji Sadasivan, Senior Minister of State, Singapore, said that constantly evolving technologies are creating countless opportunities for learning, sharing of knowledge, collaborating for content and rolling out innovative solutions. He suggested that technology be adapted to facilitate IT connectivity in rural India.

Striking a note of caution, Mr Apurv Bagri, Chairman, TiE Global, pointed out that "India's challenge in the coming years would be to uplift the lives of its poor millions. Can India be the world's third largest economy in the future while one out of its 11 children dies before reaching five years of age? That is the challenge we have to address".

Dr C K Prahalad, Professor of Business Administration, University of

Michigan's Business School, USA, expressed similar concerns. "We see world class healthcare in India, prompting people from all over the world to come here to get well. At the same time, there are many millions on Indian deprived of the basics of primary healthcare. We have world class educational institutions but many of our citizens are illiterate."

Mr Swadesh Chatterjee, CEO, Swadesh Chatterjee & Associates, USA, said, "Investment and trade are interdependent issues. An increase in investment automatically follows an increase in trade". For increase in trade, licensing regulations, taxation issues are areas that the Indian government should look into. He said, "Today, India's IT and biotech success stories are the result of minimum possible licensing regulations".

Mr Anil Kapur, MD, South Asia, Western Union, said, " We should not ignore the enormous remittances that NRIs make to fuel India's growth," while Mr Karan Bilimoria, Co-Chairman, IBP, UK, suggested the formation of an international business advisory council with eminent policy makers of India and noteworthy NRIs at a single platform.

President, GOPIO International, Mauritius, Mr Mahyendrah Utchanah, said that GOPIO is looking to adopt 50 small villages in India to trigger the developmental processes there. The Indian government should open up education to PIOs. This will build lasting relationships leading to business engagements in the future." Similarly, Secretary-General, GOPIO,

USA, Mr Ashook Ramsaran, said by engaging PIOs, India will not gain financial capital but also access to raw material supplies around the world.

Mr Harinder Takhar, Minister of Small Business and Entrepreneurship, Ontario, Canada said, "Indo-Canadians should act as a bridge between the two countries. For instance, any Indian can open an office in Canada but it is difficult for Canadians to do the same in India." Mr Ajit Khanna, President, Indo-Canadian Chamber of Commerce, said "the way to 'tap the roots' is though interest, awareness, ease of access to abundant information and presence of facilitators.

Interestingly, Mr Madan Muralidhar Dulloo, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade & Cooperation, Mauritius, said that a team of archaeologists, sociologists and historians should be set up to establish the ancient ties that India and Africa share.

Mr. Prashanta Mukherjee, Principal, Prashanta.dot.com, New Zealand, said the Indian Diaspora could best be used as a catalyst for a variety of things that include dairy and agricultural technology, marine technology, education in certain areas, employment laws and occupational security laws, food processing and telecom.

Prof. Sugata Bose, Gardiner Professor of History, Harvard University, USA, proposed effective partnerships between Harvard and Indian universities and institutions.



N Kumar,
Past President, CII



Arun Bharat Ram,
Past President, CII



Sunil Bharti Mittal,
Vice President, CII



S Ramadorai,
Managing Director, TCS



Tarun Das,
Chief Mentor, CII



Naresh Trehan,
Executive Director,
Escorts Heart Institute
Research Center

Also at Pravasi Bharatiya Divas...



Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awardees 2007



Names	Field	Country
Mr. Gopal Raju	Media	USA
Lord Dilijit Rana	Business	UK
Mr. Dave Sukhdip Singh	Public Affairs	Canada
Dr. M. Anirudhan	Business	USA
Mr. Billy Nair	Public Affairs	S.Africa
Mr. Pheroze Nowrojee	Community Affairs	Kenya
Mr. Nirmal K.Sinha	Community Affairs	USA
Tan Sri Dato Dr Somasundram	Public Affairs	Malaysia
Mr. K. S. Benjamin	Business	Jamaica
Mr. Sibabrata Roy	Community Affairs	Germany
Mr. S. M.Salahuddin	Business	UAE
Dr. B.R. Shetty	Business	UAE
Sir Moti Tika Ram	Public Affairs	Fiji
Dr. A M A Karim Wakil	Business	Portugal
Dr. P. Jayaraman	Culture	USA